



NTOA

The NTOA Member Tested and Recommended Program has tested more than 3,000 products in real-world situations since 2003 and is regarded by many law enforcement agencies as paramount to their product purchasing decisions.



OVERALL SCORE: 4.47

Stitch Auto Clip Point Series

Microtech Knives

microtechknives.com

Individual Score 3.68

Tested by a police officer from Pennsylvania

Tester 1 of 4

The Microtech Stitch Auto is a beast of a knife. The design and shape of the blade are robust and ready for whatever you throw at it. It is on the larger side for an EDC design, but the clip point still worked great, and it didn't feel too cumbersome. The fit and finish of the blade, coating and aluminum handle are top notch, and the automatic push button is well positioned. The lock is well defined, and the tension on the button prevents any accidental closing. There is a strong opening mechanism due to the overall

size and weight of the blade. At its thickest point, the blade is .19, so there's no shortage of metal to get the job done. The overall grip design is well thought out, with a nice thumb groove that locks the knife firmly in your hand. With that said, this knife is designed for right-handed users. As mentioned earlier, the only real consideration is the size of the knife you are looking for, as this is on the larger side for a folder. Overall, this is a solid performer that will last a lifetime and can be returned for service should you want to have the blade factory sharpened.

Individual Score 5

Tested by a member from Arizona

Tester 2 of 4

After reviewing the Microtech Stitch Auto, I now know why it's so expensive. This is the most robust folder I've ever used. I'm confident it will perform any task I throw at it. The auto button is protected by a raised border, making it super simple to open, but it also prevents it from opening in my pocket. I've carried it on duty in a sap pocket, in EDC regular pants pocket, and during yard work on a tool belt, all with great comfort. When I first opened it, I noticed the heft and large size, but after testing it, those are certainly perks, not drawbacks.

The auto spring is super strong and snaps open with a satisfying metal crack. It is easy to close one-handed on your leg or a table. The blade came super sharp and has held its edge very well. I have used this for everything from opening boxes and cordage to feed bags, woodworking, pencil sharpening and outdoor limb removal. This has taken a beating and never faltered. The edge has maintained well. The grip on the blade is big, but not in a bad way; it feels very good in the hand once opened. The blade jimping (notches) on both the top and bottom of the blade provides a solid grip.

This is an expensive knife. I am confident that Microtech falls under the buy once, cry once sector. You are paying for high quality, and this thing will last.

MEMBER TESTED & RECOMMENDED

RATING SCALE



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Individual Score 4.52

Tested by a member from Tennessee
Tester 3 of 4

The design of the overall knife is good; it is rather wide to carry in a pocket as an EDC, but on a vest seems to be fine. The scales are well cut and provide excellent grip even in wet conditions or with gloves. The spring is very tight, and if you are not holding on to it tightly, the knife will propel from your hands. My knife came with an entire black serrated edge, and it maintained a good sharpness throughout the cutting of various materials. However, the black finish started to show signs of wear not only from use but from inside the pocket. The blade has a good thumb ramp for holding the knife in a defensive position; however, it is rather large and wide for trying to cut in tighter areas (ie, getting under a zip tie).

Overall, it's a very durable knife of quality you would expect from a company like Microtech. The pocket clip holds the knife firmly in place due to its being a double-bent type clip.

Individual Score 4.69

Tested by a member from New Jersey
Tester 4 of 4

The Microtech Stitch Tactical Standard automatic side-folding knife features a spear point style non-serrated blade; however, they make several other versions that include both full and partially serrated blades. The blade itself is made of M390 steel, which is known for its extremely high wear resistance and high corrosion resistance. The handle is made of a triangle-style knurled alloy, and the entire knife is black in color. The knife also features a non-ambidextrous pocket clip and single button for opening and closing.

The handle itself feels like a moderate knurling and is very comfortable in the hand. The button to deploy the

Editor's Note: A Word of Caution - It is an unfortunate reality of modern commerce that anything from golf clubs to tactical gear is susceptible to imitation and copyright infringement. NTOA members are reminded to exercise care when making purchases to ensure that products are authentic. Be wary of prices that are too good to be true, and consider patronizing vetted vendors, like those who advertise in *The Tactical Edge*.

knife is a more passive, straight style knurling and works as intended. To open the knife, you simply press the button, and the blade will automatically deploy; however, to close the knife, you must press and hold the button while manually closing the blade. Deploying the knife for the first time, I was not expecting the recoil it would produce. I have never felt a knife recoil more than this one, however, I did get used to it. I found the knife to be both aesthetically pleasing and very well-built. The blade itself is very sharp and I was able to cut through, stab and slash everything I could find. During testing, I did not experience any issues with deploying or closing the knife. The blade appears to be holding its sharpness well and none of the screws appear to be coming loose from the recoil.

Overall, this is one of the nicest knives I've ever had the pleasure of using. The only negative to this knife is that it is not ambidextrous, in regards to both the pocket clip and the deploying button. Although I prefer out-the-front knives, I would highly recommend this knife.



OVERALL SCORE: 4.31

USB-588-T

NightStick

nightstick.com



RATING SCALE



Individual Score 4.88

*Tested by a police officer from Florida
Tester 1 of 7*

The Nightstick USB-588-T Tactical Flashlight is a stand-out choice for police officers working night shifts, offering a blend of design, quality and functionality. The flashlight has a waterproof rating, ensuring reliability in various weather conditions. The flashlight features a powerful 1,100-lumen beam, complemented by a 370-lumen downward-facing floodlight. Its compact size enhances portability, and the dual-light functionality provides versatility for different operational needs. The built-in USB-C charging port adds convenience, allowing for direct recharging without the need for disposable batteries.

However, while the USB-588-T excels in design and functionality, its performance is slightly hindered by battery life. The rechargeable lithium-ion battery may not last through extended night shifts, necessitating daily charging. Despite this, the flashlight remains a valuable tool for law enforcement professionals. Its ergonomic design ensures comfort during prolonged use, and its dual-light feature enhances accuracy in low-light situations. Overall, the Nightstick USB-588-T Tactical Flashlight is a reliable companion for night shift officers, offering a balance of performance and convenience, with the caveat of requiring regular charging.

Individual Score 4

*Tested by a member from New Jersey
Tester 2 of 7*

The Nightstick USB-588-T flashlight works well and has an interesting 2-in-1 light system. One light works as a standard flashlight and the other works like a floodlight. For the flashlight, the beam intensity, lighting and light penetration work well. The light itself seems well built and appears to have decent battery life. The light is a little larger than other hand-held flashlights I've used in that size range and I could see it better fitted toward being secured on a vest carrier. The floodlight feature is innovative, but for patrol work, it is not needed. While it is bright, it doesn't emit a strong enough light to serve that purpose. After a few drops, and getting rained on, the light seems to hold up.

Overall, it is a good flashlight with a unique but niche feature in the floodlight. The rechargeability via USB is useful, and if you were looking for a patrol light, this would get the job done.

Individual Score 4.66

*Tested by a member from Michigan
Tester 3 of 7*

Overall, I thought the NightStick USB-588-T flashlight was great. I only used the rechargeable battery, but it comes with an option to use disposable batteries. The flashlight also has a "flood light" feature that I thought was going to be rather gimmicky, but it works pretty well. I dropped the flashlight a few times during some training, and it had no issues; nothing broke or stopped working. The flashlight texture felt good and provided a good grip. I would highly recommend this flashlight.

Individual Score 4.61

*Tested by a member from Oklahoma
Tester 4 of 7*

I had the privilege of testing and reviewing the Nightstick Turbo Dual-Light Tactical USB-588-T flashlight. What a bright light! It weighs 6.89 ounces with battery installed. The construction of the flashlight is solid, and it has a light but durable weight to it. You can get a firm grip on the flashlight. There are several areas of the flashlight with grooves and notches, which makes it great for gripping regardless of hand size. For those with wet or sweaty hands, this is a good addition to prevent the flashlight from slipping. The overall feel of the flashlight is very comfortable.

The flashlight has an aluminum body, so it is robust. I did not apply this in the testing period, but I would feel comfortable using a flashlight to break a vehicle window in an emergency. I had no opportunity to utilize the flashlight in this way, but I believe it could be done. There is reinforced aluminum/metal above the glass that houses the spot beam, which would protect the flashlight if the flashlight were used as a blunt object for breaking vehicle windows.

There are two switches. The tail switch activates the front-facing spot beam, and the side switch activates a side or down-facing floodlight, which is dependent on the orientation of the flashlight. If you hold the tail switch down, you can cycle through different brightness levels up to 1,100 lumens.

The spot beam has a very bright, white light, which illuminates very well. The floodlight is not as focused, but it has a wide umbrella of light that is softer, making it easier on the eyes when illuminating an object. Having these two options on a flashlight is very innovative.



WWW.JNTACTICAL.COM

MADE IN USA



RATING SCALE



I was able to use the spot beam to look through tinted windows at night. Whatever the beam touched, it illuminated. The floodlight option did not do as well for tinted windows; however, with no tint, it was fine.

The flashlight comes with a rechargeable battery, which is very convenient. There is a USB-C rechargeable plug that connects directly to the flashlight for quick charging. Note: The battery does not have to be removed to charge. Great option for not having to buy replacement batteries. I left the flashlight in the car for a couple of days in the heat. The heat did not seem to affect the operation of the flashlight or battery life.

While keeping the flashlight spot beam on continuously, I had no issue with the metal parts of the flashlight getting too hot. The glass was hot above the spot beam, but no other part of the flashlight was hot to the touch.

Individual Score 3.9

*Tested by a police officer from Ohio
Tester 5 of 7*

The Nightstick USB-588T is a durable flashlight that stands out for its practical features. The USB charging is incredibly convenient, eliminating the need for bulky chargers. I dropped the light purposefully, submerged it in water, and it continued to work flawlessly, showcasing its excellent durability. It provides just the right amount of illumination to spot objects without being overwhelming. The dimming feature works well but could be better. The light is pretty basic compared to competitor lights that I have owned. I would like it to be a little smaller or easier to put on my vest.

Overall, the Nightstick USB-588T is a good flashlight. The durability is where it stands out. I have had lights stop working after one drop. This withstood my purposeful abuse. The light is competitive in its class.

Individual Score 3.88

*Tested by a member from South Dakota
Tester 6 of 7*

I used the NightStick USB-588-T daily for several weeks while instructing low-light firearms during our in-service training. The light was very bright with a significant throw and usable hot spot. The light was well-focused and gave enough spillover light to be useful at all ranges. Threat identification with the NightStick was easier compared to many other lights present. The usefulness of the secondary

flood light is a matter of personal preference. None of the instructors used the floodlight.

Charging is easy to do, and the battery lasts longer compared to other brands. The light was predictably dropped on concrete during drills, and this is where we ran into the only problem. The light was dropped tail-first onto the tail cap. This impact broke something loose inside the switch, allowing it to move underneath the rubber cover. The light would still turn on and off, but the click of the light was gone. If the switch were pushed off center, the light would be difficult to turn off.

Shielding the tail cap button would prevent the full impact from going into the switch. It would also be beneficial to give the button more momentary light travel before clicking into constant on mode. Durability beyond the tail cap switch was great. It was dropped from every possible angle, kicked and heavily used. There was unavoidable cosmetic damage, but nothing else broke. Beyond the tail cap switch issue, this was a bright, durable light.

Individual Score 4.25

*Tested by a member from Pennsylvania
Tester 7 of 7*

The Nightstick USB-588-T flashlight had some really nice features. Let's start with the things I didn't care for. I did not like the size. It was difficult to use as a personal light while on duty. Although it fit inside a pocket, it was bulging and uncomfortable. It did not fit in a standard personal light holster and was too small to fit into a patrol size. I believe the features of this light could be adapted for a smaller version, making it more comfortable to use on duty. It would have been nice if the light had brightness selections. For a light that size, one would think that would be an option.

The negatives above did not spoil the party. I carried the light in a patrol bag and deployed it as needed. The brightness was insane! This thing outperforms the department Streamlights we carry for duty and is half the size. It was great that it had the USB option. Batteries and charging docks are a thing of the past, so this makes it better than most personal lights. The secondary switch was a nice addition. It was used as a lantern and comes in handy for DUI field testing. Holding the light upright is more ergonomic than pointing it. The light's case was very sturdy, too. It was dropped and placed in water, and it withstood the test. The lens cover did get a small scratch, though.



TRAINING ACADEMY

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Tactical:

Ballistic Shield Instructor
Armored Vehicle Tactics Operator
Low Power Variable Optic/DM Instructor
Shoot House Instructor





RATING SCALE



OVERALL SCORE: 4.75

Enhanced SBR

APF Armory

apfarmory.com

Individual Score 4.66

Tested by a police officer from Pennsylvania

Tester 1 of 4

The APF Enhanced LE SBR rifle has a very tight tolerance billet upper and lower receiver, with a built-in flared magwell and matching profile for a nice fit with the T-marked APF handguard. It came with Magpul Gen 3 BUIS, stock, grip and one 30-round Gen 2 magazine. It has a 10.5" barrel with an adjustable gas block and carbine-length gas system. It featured a Geissele two-stage trigger, an ambidextrous safety, a large Breek Arms Warhammer charging handle, a B5 Systems buffer endplate, an H2 buffer, an oversized trigger guard and an ambidextrous bolt release.

The rifle was set up with a Romeo 4T on a 1.92" Sclarworks T2 mount, and the A2 flash hider that came with it was swapped for a Surefire ProComp I had lying around. Once the muzzle device from Yankee Hill Machine Co. arrived, the ProComp was swapped again, and the rifle was run with a YHM Fat Cat for the remainder of testing.

During the test period, I shot approximately 1,500 rounds — 500 rounds unsuppressed and 1,000 suppressed. There was no break-in period, and the rifle required minimal maintenance beyond regular cleaning of the BCG and relubrication.

The gun balanced and runs flawlessly both with and without a suppressor. The recoil impulse was fast and light, which kept the rifle on target with little to no effort. No parts came loose or needed adjusting. The flared magwell makes mag changes quicker and easier without being oversized or causing any snag points.

Now for the not-so-great things I noticed during the evaluation. The ambidextrous bolt catch release is next to impossible to manipulate with my right index finger. When

running the rifle left-handed (weak/off hand for me), I can use the right-side ambidextrous bolt release with my right thumb, in the same method a right-handed individual manipulates the standard bolt release with their left-hand thumb after a reload, with no problem.

The second issue I found during a reload drill, although this may just be the way I reload magazines, and therefore may have no bearing. During my reload procedure, I begin to lift the muzzle of the gun in an upward direction while ejecting the mag, and then turn the gun toward my left hip, where the reload is coming from. During these reloads, I found a few times that it did not eject the magazine while the gun was in a horizontal position; the magazine would clear the magazine catch but not drop free, causing me to tap the old mag with a fresh one to knock it loose or else strip in the new magazine before completing the reload. I tested this with several magazines, including Magpul Gen 2 and 3 (one with a +5 baseplate, and one 20rd mag), Lancer L5-AWM (one with a +6 baseplate), Okay Industries aluminum mags with Magpul followers, and Colt mags both 30rd GI and 20rd straight body. During these tests, I found that the aluminum magazines would drop free at just about any angle, whereas the polymer-style mags would stick. Back at the armory, a quick check with calipers showed that the polymer mags were shorter front to back by approximately .01-.03". A feeler gauge was used against the magwell while a magazine was seated, and it also showed approximately the same size difference as the calipers. The magwell was polished with ultra-fine emery cloth and WD-40, and the problem appeared to stop.

Overall, I am very impressed with the quality of the rifle and its handling. The two issues I discovered could be due to the way I train or attempt to use the gear, and do not hinder the gun's performance, as others using the gun either did not use the ambi bolt release or were left-handed and could use it as it was likely designed. No one else encountered the magazine failing to drop free. I would highly recommend this gun for duty/patrol use without any hesitation.

Individual Score 4.81

Tested by a member from Louisiana

Tester 2 of 4

The APF-15 platform presents a slightly heavier profile than some comparable rifles, but its weight is well distributed, resulting in a balanced and stable feel during operation. This balance contributes to smooth handling, especially during rapid target transitions or extended training sessions. The weight of the weapon over time can affect someone who does not have sufficient shoulder strength when using the straight arm C-clamp method.

In the live-fire evaluations, the weapon performed exceptionally well. It cycled smoothly, delivering consistent and controlled recoil with each round. Even through multiple consecutive magazine runs, which were approximately 900 rounds at a time, the rifle showed no signs of malfunction or hesitation. These durations occurred at several points throughout the process. Notably, it managed heat efficiently, remaining stable, reliable and comfortable to handle despite sustained firing. I utilized multiple manufacturers and grains in the .223 calibers. The bulk of the rounds utilized were Winchester Ranger 55 Grain Ballistic Silver Tip.

Overall, the platform demonstrates strong build quality, dependable function and excellent thermal performance.

Individual Score 4.72

*Tested by a member from Nebraska
Tester 3 of 4*

The Enhanced Short Barreled Rifle from APF armory has been a pleasure to review, albeit a little frustrating. First impression out of the box is that the rifle is well put together, with little wobble between the upper and lower receiver. The accuracy is more than acceptable, and I was

getting consistent groups of less than 1 MOA at 50 yards with both duty and training ammunition. The trigger on the rifle is exquisite, as you would expect from a Geissele SSA 2-Stage trigger. The rifle was well-tuned out of the box and produced tight groups from the first-round shot.

Unfortunately, the rifle is listed on APF's website for \$2,399, and I cannot in good conscience recommend it at that price point. For that price, for a bare rifle (plus flip-up irons, which work perfectly), I expect this rifle to be flawless, and that is just not the case. When I first received the rifle, I noticed that the pistol grip angle felt weird. After holding it for a while, I noticed that the top rear portion of the grip does not fully mate to the lower receiver. This created a gap between the two, throwing the grip off. I can't consistently manipulate the safety from the strong side of this rifle as a right-handed shooter. The ambidextrous side of the safety gets caught on my trigger finger, and I have to significantly alter my grip to consistently manipulate the safety. As a result, I ended up manipulating the ambidextrous side of the safety with my strong hand thumb, like you would shoot a MP5. I'm still not sure where the issue lies, and if it is quality control on Magpul's end or APF's end. The gap mentioned above is not present in their online photos. I verified that the grip screw was correctly threaded and that



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RATING SCALE



it was completely tightened. The rest of the grip seemed to line up as designed, but it's almost like the grip stop line that runs horizontally at the top of the pistol grip was printed too low. Again, I'm not certain. I wish I could add photos to demonstrate the gap.

Additionally, the rifle's controls are extremely tough. The bolt catch/release is noticeably tougher to activate than any other AR-15 I've ever handled. Even with lubricant and several hundred manipulations of the mechanism, neither dry-fire nor 1v1 reload drills seemed to help with the problem. On the ejection port side of the rifle, APF has a bolt release built into the receiver that is supposed to be actuated by the trigger finger to send the bolt forward. It's a great idea I haven't seen on another rifle, but it's completely unusable because of the resistance. Again, even after lubrication and several hundred repetitions to loosen it up, neither I nor any of my colleagues can get the release to work as designed with just one finger, with any consistency.

Lastly, when cleaning the rifle, I broke down the BCG. The firing pin retaining pin would not seat when I put the rifle back together. Another pin slid in just fine. The tension on the open side of the pin opened it up just enough that it wouldn't seat through the second hole.

Ultimately, with a rifle at this price point, I expect perfection. The APF Armory Enhanced SBR does not come close to meeting that criteria. Will I carry it? Sure. My department doesn't let us carry our own personal rifles, and this is the closest thing I have access to that I can customize. Would I carry it over my 11.5 BCM if I had the choice? Absolutely not. For about half the price, departments can get a battle-proven rifle from a tried and tested manufacturer. I don't know if this rifle is just a lemon, but if it was cherry-picked for a review, then this cherry is too sour to eat.

Individual Score 4.82

Tested by a member from California

Tester 4 of 4

I recently evaluated the new APF Armory Enhanced 5.56 10.5-inch SBR (LE Model), a compact, duty-grade, and highly reliable close-quarters weapon system built with the end user in mind. This updated platform features a 10.5" chrome-lined barrel, pinned carbine-length adjustable gas system, Geissele SSA two-stage trigger, M16 phosphate BCG, Magpul MBUS flip-up sights, Magpul SL-S six-position stock and Magpul MOE K2 grip. The receivers are similarly refined, incorporating ambidextrous controls and a 9" M-LOK Enhanced handguard. Thanks to its short overall length, the rifle excels in vehicle-based operations, interior work, and tactical environments where rapid movement and confined spaces dominate.

While the platform performed well overall, a few design choices were less favorable. The ambidextrous safety lever felt obstructive; a shorter support-side lever would be preferable. The trigger guard, "while intended to accommodate thick winter gloves," looks awkward, though it's easy enough to replace. The ambidextrous bolt-lock release was the most significant drawback; it remained stiff and difficult to actuate, even after extended use. The concept is solid, but in practice, it's too hard to engage using the trigger finger alone.

During testing, I put nearly 1,000 rounds through the rifle across multiple stress scenarios. It ran flawlessly with no malfunctions, and cooling times were impressively quick. Muzzle blast was noticeable at times, which is expected from a short-barreled rifle with a standard birdcage muzzle brake. I did not test it suppressed, but there's little reason to believe performance would suffer.

Overall, the APF Enhanced 5.56 10.5" SBR is a compelling choice for specialized law-enforcement applications where compactness, durability and close-quarters reliability outweigh the ballistic trade-offs of a shorter barrel. It's well-suited for SWAT, tactical teams and vehicle-deployed officers, though somewhat less ideal for general patrol duties that may require longer-range engagements. For agencies willing to navigate NFA requirements and invest in a premium, duty-ready SBR, APF's latest offering stands out as a capable and well-engineered platform.



OVERALL SCORE: 4.66

Genesis 29

Bison Outdoor

bisonoutdoor.com

Individual Score 5

*Tested by a police officer from Pennsylvania
Tester 1 of 2*

Overall, the Genesis 29 is a very solid and well-constructed pack. The seams and stitching are strong and held together well. The straps are easily adjustable and maintain the adjustments while in use. The zippers seem indestructible; I was unable to cause them to fail. It maintained good water resistance when left out in heavy rain. I was able to fit a complete SWAT uniform, including boots, pants, two shirts, rain gear and cold-weather gear, with ample room to spare for additional equipment/supplies. Very comfortable to carry for long periods.

Individual Score 4.32

*Tested by a member from Ohio
Tester 2 of 2*

The Genesis 29 backpack is solid with several pockets to keep equipment organized and separated. The 29 refers to the size, and it's a middle-of-the-road bag size-wise from Bison Outdoor. It's a good size for going to and from work or the range. It's not big enough for a change of clothes and shoes if you were taking it to the gym. I've been throwing it in and out of a cruiser, on the ground at the range, and it has held up. The pockets are lined with a rubber coating that has kept the inside dry. In the past, I've owned bags with that type of lining, and after a year or so, it starts to crack and peel away. I haven't had the bag long enough to notice any of that.

During my evaluation, I tried to use the bag as much as possible and was pretty rough with it. It held up and shows no wear. Now that the evaluation is over, I plan to use it as a go bag in my personal vehicle. The size and pockets on the 29 are perfect for that purpose.

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